

how Air Force chaplains can pray, and if approved, those guidelines may well be implemented throughout the entire DoD. We believe that the Air Force's suppression of religious freedom is a pervasive problem throughout our nation's Armed Forces, and it has come to our attention that in all branches of the military it is becoming increasingly difficult for Christian chaplains to use the name of Jesus when praying. There are currently no laws or regulations that prohibit chaplains from praying according to their respective denominations or different faiths, and we are deeply concerned that chaplains are now being instructed on what to say when they pray.

Throughout our nation's history, chaplains not only have remained an integral part of our military, but they also have always prayed according to their faith tradition; and Christian chaplains have always been able to pray using the name of Jesus. We believe that if Christian chaplains are chosen to pray before a professional setting, then they—as with the chaplain of any other faith—have a constitutional right to adhere to the religious expressions of their faith. Praying in the name of Jesus is a fundamental part of Christian belief and to suppress this form of expression would be a violation of religious freedom.

The current demand in the guidelines for so-called “no-sectarian” prayers is merely a euphemism declaring that prayers will be acceptable only so long as they censor Christian beliefs. Current surveys in the military indicate that upwards of 80 percent of soldiers identify themselves as Christians, and such censorship of Christian beliefs is a disservice not only to Christian chaplains, but also to the hundreds of thousands of Christian soldiers in the military who look to their chaplains for comfort, inspiration, and support, just as our military soldiers of other faiths look to the chaplains of their faith.

While some military members may find certain prayers to be offensive and wrongly claim that they are not non-pluralistic, we believe these restrictions raise constitutional issues involving the Establishment, Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment (There are numerous other offensive provisions throughout the proposed guidelines, including the onerous provision that chaplains can only speak of their faith with officers—the “peer to peer” provision). Officially inhibiting or defining what chaplains can and cannot say in effect establishes an official religion and burdens our military's chaplains' right of free speech.

We are requesting that you, as Commander and Chief, protect by Executive Order the constitutional right of military chaplains to pray according to their faith.

With deep concern,

Walter B. Jones, Sam Johnson, Joseph Pitts, John Hostettler, Trent Franks, Joel Hefley, Scott Garrett, Robert Aderholt, Virginia Foxx, Dave Weldon, J. Gresham Barrett, Randy Neugebauer, Jo Ann Davis, Michael Bilirakis, Frank R. Wolf, John Culberson, Henry Brown, Melissa Hart, Steve Chabot, Louie Gohmert.

Jeb Hensarling, Virgil H. Goode, Jr., Rob Bishop, Darrell Issa, Spencer Bachus, Michael E. Sodrel, Ron Lewis, Steve King, W. Todd Akin, Robin Hayes, Donald Manzullo, Marilyn Musgrave, Mark Souder, Mike McIntyre, K. Michael Conaway, Jim Ryun, Charles W. “Chip” Pickering, J. Randy Forbes, Todd Tiahrt, Ron Paul.

Katherine Harris, Tom Price, Sue Myrick, Bob Beauprez, Roger Wicker, Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, Jeff Miller, Gil Gutknecht, Rodney Alexander,

John Sullivan, Joe Wilson, John R. Carter, Mike Rogers, Bob Inglis, Luis Fortuño, Bobby Jindal, Michael Turner, Michael McCaul, Wally Herger, C. L. “Butch” Otter, Michael C. Burgess, Dan Burton, Phil Gingrey.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of other points and then I will start closing.

For 4 years I have heard from chaplains around this Nation in letter, meeting with them in person, by telephone, and they have told me just how concerned and disappointed they are that they do not have the freedom. Let me at this time read a letter from a marine major written to me in May of this year, getting ready to go to Iraq. He is in Iraq tonight, and I hope and pray that all of our men and women in uniform are safe.

He said: “Dear Congressman Jones, I am a member of the military, and there is something that I think you should know.

“Before my last change of command, my chaplain came to me and asked if I minded if he mentioned Jesus in his prayer given at the start of the ceremony. I was surprised by the question since the prayer was for me and my family and we are Christian and we specifically desired he do so. He alluded to the fact that he and other chaplains have been asked not to mention Jesus Christ. This startles and frightens me that one's faith is being infringed upon even within our own military. I strongly believe in religious freedom, and I hope you understand my grave concerns about forces that would try to limit it.

“I hope you can find support to stop this intolerance that is creeping into all walks of life. Sincerely.”

This, again, is a marine major who is in Iraq fighting for freedom for the Iraqis and for those in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, the last letter I want to make reference to is from a chaplain in the United States Army, and he wrote: “Thank you for your interest in ending the religious persecution that exists in our military today. I am a chaplain in the United States Army, and I can tell you in all honesty that religious persecution is taking place in the Army on a daily basis. The persecution centers on Christian chaplains praying in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Additionally, I have personally been subject to heavy-handed intimidation by a senior chaplain.”

Mr. Speaker, there is story after story after story that I could share with the Members on the floor tonight, but because of time, I can only give those two situations. But this is a grave situation that we in Congress, like the young man tonight from California that was sworn in, Mr. CAMPBELL, hold up our hand to protect the constitutional rights of the people of this great Nation. Please, Mr. Speaker, as I close, I ask that we in this Congress defend the first amendment right of all of our chaplains.

And I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform and God continue to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND'S WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM FOR WINNING THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the Special Order time of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we have had a great deal of give and take on the floor this evening, important issues that we have discussed throughout the day. But I am pleased this evening to rise to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the women's soccer team for the University of Portland, which this last weekend won their second national championship in the last 3 years. The Lady Pilots finished the season undefeated. They set a single-season attendance record, or rather their rabid fans did, over 40,000, the first time this has ever happened.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very solid program that was built by the late Clive Charles, the legendary soccer coach, a solid foundation that has made a tremendous difference for women's soccer in our State of Oregon and around the country.

It is my pleasure to extend congratulations to President Bill Beauchamp, Coach Garrett Smith, and the players: the 2005 College Cup MVP for the offense, Christine Sinclair; the defensive MVP, Cori Alexander; and College Cup all tournament team members, Stephanie Lopez, Angie Woznuk, Megan Rapinoe, and Lindsey Huie. They are truly a work of art to watch, the camaraderie, the spirit, the drive and determination of this team. It has performed at an outstanding level for over a dozen years now.

Somewhere in heaven I know the late Clive Charles is smiling, and in Portland the entire community is cheering.

POLITICAL PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, 65 years ago today our Nation was attacked by enemies of freedom, and we heeded the call to action. The Greatest Generation battled tyranny and then led the effort to help Europe rebuild.

On September 11, 2001, another day that will live in infamy in our Nation's